

Message Text

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ACTION INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2124

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 10786

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, CI

SUBJ: LEONIDAS IRARRAZAVAL BARROS: NEW CHILEAN AMBASSADOR TO
FRANCE

1. THE GOC HAS APPOINTED CAREER DIPLOMAT LEONIDAS IRARRAZAVAL BARROS NEW CHILEAN AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE. IRARRAZAVAL HAD BEEN THE CHARGE SINCE AUGUST 9, WHEN AMBASSADOR JORGE ERRAZURIZ ECHENIQUE SUFFERED A FATAL HEART ATTACK IN PARIS. THERE HAD BEEN CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION AS TO WHO WOULD BE NAMED TO THE POST, AND IT WAS A SURPRISE THAT A FAIRLY JUNIOR MINISTER COUNSELOR AND CAREER MAN RECEIVED THE NOD. IT MAY BE THAT THE MM SENI COMPETITORS CANCELLED THEMSELVES OUT; IN ANY EVENT, THE APPOINTMENT IS AN UNUSUAL INDICATION OF CONFIDENCE IN A CAREER DIPLOMAT.

2. IRARRAZAVAL WAS CALLED BACK FROM HIS BELGIUM DCM POSITION TO WORK IN THE FONMINISTRY IN THE CRITICAL AND TUMULTUOUS DAYS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE 1973 COUP. HE TRAVELED TO NEW YORK ON SEPTEMBER 20, 1973 AND REPRESENTED CHILE IN THE UN'S THIRD COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, WHERE HE ANSWERED MANY OF THE ATTACKS LEVELLED AGAINST THE NEW JUNTA.

3. IRARRAZAVAL RETURNED TO CHILE IN JANUARY 1974 AND BECAME ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE FONMINISTRY'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DIRECTORATE. HE WAS PROMOTED TO MINISTER COUNSELOR ON
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OCTOBER 15, 1974 AND SENT AS DCM TO THE EMBASSY IN LIMA

SHORTLY THEREAFTER. WHILE THERE, HE HEADED THE GOC DELEGATION TO THE FIRST ANDEAN CONFERENCE ON ARMS LIMITATION. HE ACTED AS DELEGATION VICE-CHAIRMAN DURING THE SECOND CONFERENCE IN SANTIAGO IN SEPTEMBER 1975. IRARRAZAVAL TRAVELED TO PARIS IN JANUARY 1976 TO ASSUME THE POSITION OF EMBASSY MINISTER COUNSELOR.

4. PERSONAL DATA: IRARRAZAVAL WAS BORN ON DECEMBER 16, 1931, AND IS A LAWYER BY PROFESSION, HE IS MARRIED TO THE FORMER MARIA DEL PILAR OSSANDON VALDES AND HAS FOUR CHILDREN: MARIA DEL PILAR, TERESA, MARIA ELISA AND LEONIDAS EDUARDO. IRARRAZAVAL STUDIED LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHILE'S LAW SCHOOL, GRADUATING IN 1959. HE ENTERED THE CHILEAN FOREIGN SERVICE IN 1954. HE SPEAKS GOOD ENGLISH.

5. IRARRAZAVAL IS KNOWN TO THE EMBASSY AS A CAPABLE, WELL BALANCED DIPLOMAT WHO COOPERATED CLOSELY WITH US DURING HIS TIME AT THE FONMINISTRY IN 1974. HE IS FRIENDLY AND ALWAYS APPEARED PRO-U.S.
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